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## SUCCESS STORY

### Functional Offices Increase Government Capacity To Serve the Public



This new building in South Sudan allows the County Commissioner to conduct government business – rain or shine.

*USAID/OTI supports emerging civil authorities in southern Sudan by providing “government-in-a-box” kits to 22 counties.*

**July 2007** – Until recently, the Tonj East County Commissioner could be found conducting government affairs under a large mango tree. Although the space was adequately ventilated, exposure to the elements often disrupted work and made a proper filing system unthinkable. More than two decades of civil war had left South Sudan’s infrastructure, including health facilities, schools, and government offices, in ruins.

USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) recently stepped in with support for county offices in southern Sudan when it became clear that a lack of space, furniture, and supplies was hindering local government’s ability to function effectively. A total of 22 counties received

“government-in-a-box” (GIB) kits, 16 of which included prefabricated buildings. Furnished with tables and chairs, filing cabinets, bookshelves, and basic office supplies, approximately 180 government officials now have practical workspaces that allow them to conduct business more efficiently and build institutional memory at the local level. As counties’ capacities to serve their constituencies increase, so too will the public’s confidence in the peace process.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 ushered in a new era for southern Sudan, yet large parts of the population remain skeptical of the CPA’s implementation. Aware that over-centralization of government led to marginalization and war in the past, the new Government of Southern Sudan is working toward a more decentralized form of rule that will allow greater public participation in political affairs. With this in mind, southern Sudan has been divided into 10 states and more than 70 counties.

The provision of GIB kits is one of many activities USAID/OTI has funded to support the new civil government and demonstrate the tangible benefits of peace to the people of southern Sudan. USAID/OTI’s well-established presence in the field has facilitated a flexible and rapid response during the transition period.